Modernsation of Lilabari Airport

887. SHRI NYODEK YONGGAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a number of passengers for Itanagar and Laknimpur Districts of Assam get stranded at Guwahati Airport due to non-availability of flights;

(b) whether Government propose to modernise Lilabari airport for boeing services; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) The needs of the passengers from Itanagar and Lakhimpur were being served by Vayudoot operations to Lilabari. Due to shortage of aircraft capacity, Vayudoot operations to Lilabari were suspended. Vayudoot has plans to restore its operations to Lilabari w.e.f. 15th September, 1991.

(b) and (c) The upgradation of Lilabari airport for Boeing-737 operations, which would cost approximately Rs. 12,00 crores (excluding cost of land), depends on the availability of nearly 60 acres of land free of cost from the State Government and resources being made available to the National Airports Authority.

Purchase of equipment by Air India and Indian Airlines

888. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been invited to the news-item captioned "Rs. 1 crore equipment lies idle in Air India-Indian Airlines tiff" which appeared in the 'Indian Express', Bombay of the 14th August, 1991;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any responsibility has been fixed on the authorities concerned in Air India and Indian Airlines for such reckless spending and ordering of ground handling equipment worth Rupees one crore, if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) what action Government propose to take to prevent such ill-planned spending?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Air India has not purchased any new ground handling equipment for positioning the same at Trivandrum Airport. Equipment acquired by Indian Airlines will be used to supplement the ground handling equipment at other major bases.

Inducting professionals in the managements of airlines

889. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has seen the news-item captioned "Airlines should be left to professionals" purporting to give an account of his interview as reported in the 'Economic Times', New Delhi dated the 30th July, 1991; and

(b) if so, what action is being taken to put a professional aviation expert as Managing Director of Air India and also to induct more professionals in place of the present bureaucrats on the Board of Directors of both the airlines?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Action has been initiated for the appointment of a permanent